

# SMITH SKYSCRAPER HAS A NOVEL DESIGN

**Setbacks of the Empire State  
Building Will Begin With  
the Sixth Story.**

## LIFTS IN CENTRE CYLINDER

**Plan Will Save Space and Assure  
Light and Air to Neighbors—  
Mooring Mast Offers Problems.**

Details of architects' plans for the Empire State Building, which will occupy the site of the old Waldorf-Astoria, and modern ideas in office construction, intended to make economically feasible the carry of the structure, with its dirigible mooring mast, to a height of about 1,300 feet were explained yesterday by former Governor Alfred E. Smith and John J. Raskob following a meeting of the directors of Empire State, Inc.

Although the skyscraper will be eighty-five stories high, light and air protection will be afforded to neighboring buildings as well as to tenants through a setback and floor arrangement designed by Shreve, Lamb & Harmon, the architects, and known as the "Empire State formula," Mr. Smith announced. Only five floors will be constructed over the entire ground area, setbacks starting with the sixth floor, although the law would allow twelve or thirteen stories on the Fifth Avenue frontage and about seventeen on Thirty-third and Thirty-fourth Streets before setbacks start, he said.

"Elevators, cable shafts and other utilities will be grouped in a central cylindrical 'well' which will conserve space," he asserted. "Although our building will contain some 3,000,000 square feet of rental space, we are taking about 300,000 square feet less than the amount permitted under the zoning laws for a building plot of such tremendous size. We believe we have solved the problem of light and air in congested districts and feel that if our formula is followed such buildings can go up without endangering the health of tenants or neighbors. In our plan we recognize that the maximum floor space is not always the most desirable space and we substitute for great unbroken floor areas in the lower floors smaller but better lighted space on the upper floors. Instead of being distributed throughout the wings of the building, the sixty-four elevators, together with mail chutes, staircases and other such equipment will be centred in space tapering upward to a cone. Because of this new grouping the structure could easily have been carried to a greater height than is now proposed, but we are measuring its rise by principles of economic investment rather than by spectacular standards."

The dirigible mooring mast, due to rise more than 200 feet above the roof, is presenting technical problems, but these are no greater than might be expected under such a

novel plan, and authorization already has been given for steel specifications sufficient to bear the added burden of the mast, Mr. Smith said. The chief problem now confronting the engineers is that of anchoring the tail of the ship. At most fields the ships are held at the rear by a cable attached to a revolving disk, he explained.

"We are assured of cooperation of the Navy Department in our plan to provide a convenient landing spot in the city for airships of future passenger lines and will be able to make use of the Los Angeles in testing the mast," Mr. Smith added.

There will be five entrances to the building, the architects explained. The tower proper will rise fifty-six stories, starting from the twenty-ninth floor. Space will be sufficient to care for 20,000 to 25,000 tenants, and observation space will be provided on the roof. Demolition of the old Waldorf is nearing completion and the new building, to be the highest in the world, is scheduled to be finished in May, 1931.

Mr. Smith received a belated Christmas present from the Board of Taxes and Assessments yesterday when the board granted his request that taxes on the buildings occupying the site west of Fifth Avenue, from Thirty-third to Thirty-fourth Street, be remitted on the ground that the buildings are being demolished and are of no actual value. This is the site for the Empire State Building.

As the assessed value of the buildings is more than \$2,000,000, the board's action yesterday means a saving to the former Governor's corporation of between \$55,000 and \$60,000. The land on which the buildings stand is valued at \$13,000,000 and full taxes must be paid on this, the board told Mr. Smith.